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*Criminal Tables for the Year 1845.—England and Wales.*

The following Explanations and Calculations, with reference to the accompanying Tables, have been made by Mr. REDGRAVE, of the Home Office, who compiled and prepared the Tables.

THE records of the Commitments for Trial have shewn, with only very trifling intermissions, a continuous increase in the numbers of offenders annually committed. From the first record in 1805 (when the Commitments for the whole of England and Wales did not exceed the numbers now committed in the metropolitan county alone) to 1842, when the Commitments attained the maximum hitherto recorded, this increase had progressed from year to year until it had extended to above 600 per cent.

In 1843 a change commenced. In that year the Commitments decreased 5·5 per cent. In the next year there was a more considerable decrease, no less than 10·3 per cent.; which was succeeded in 1845 by a further decrease of 8·4 per cent.—this period forming only the second instance in 40 years of a decrease of Commitments extending over three consecutive years. In the last six years, three years of great increase have been followed by three years of decrease so considerable, that the number of Commitments in 1845 has been reduced to what it was seven years ago.

In the following analysis, this decrease, which has continued during the last three years, will be contrasted with the increase in the preceding three years, for the purpose of pointing out those offences in which the proportionate decrease has been the most remarkable. This inquiry will serve to distinguish the crimes which have arisen out of the temporary depression and distress of the labouring classes, from those which may be attributed to more permanent causes, more especially the want of instruction and moral training.

The number of the Commitments in each of the last nine years, and the totals in each period of three years, were as follows:—

1837 .....	23,612	1840 .....	27,187	1843 .....	29,591
1838 .....	23,094	1841 .....	27,760	1844 .....	26,542
1839 .....	24,443	1842 .....	31,309	1845 .....	24,303
	<u>71,149</u>		<u>86,256</u>		<u>80,436</u>

The increase in the first of these periods, compared with the corresponding preceding period, was 10·9 per cent.; in the second, 21·2; and the decrease in the last period 6·7 per cent. Such are the general results. In examining them in detail, it will be necessary, in the first place, to trace the proportionate decrease in the several counties, and then to show how far it has affected the different descriptions of crime.

Commencing with the great Mineral District in the north of England, comprising Cumberland, Northumberland, and Durham, there appears in these counties a decrease of 37 per cent. in 1845. The decrease which began generally in 1843 did not extend to this district until last year, probably from the ill effects of the protracted “strikes”

among the miners; and the unfavourable comparison in the two last periods of three years, which show an increase of 17 per cent. in this district, may be attributed to the same cause.

In the extensive and populous counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire, the chief seats of the great staple Woollen and Cotton Manufactures, the large decrease of Commitments in 1843 and 1844 has continued, and there is a decrease in 1845, which arises chiefly in Yorkshire, of 6·9 per cent., and, comparing the two last periods of three years, of 19·1 per cent.

In the adjoining counties of Chester, Derby, Nottingham, and Leicester, where the silk, lace, and hosiery manufactures are chiefly carried on, a considerable decrease is shewn in each county, which last year reached 22 per cent. on the aggregate, and 13·2 per cent. on a comparison of the two last periods of three years.

The decrease has also extended to Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, the seats of the principal hardware, pottery, and glass manufactures, and to the adjoining county of Gloucester. In this district the aggregate decrease in 1845 was 13 per cent., in the two last three years 9·6 per cent.

The record of this state of the Commitments in the counties above mentioned, which comprise the chief industrial population of England, and the chief of her manufacturing and commercial products, is very satisfactory. The aggregate decrease for these districts in the last year amounts to 14 per cent.; and on the extended comparison of the two last periods of three years to 14·1 per cent.

In the agricultural districts, where the decrease was only partial in 1844, it has been more general and of larger amount in the last year. In each of the large northern and north-eastern counties of Lincoln, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, there was a considerable decrease, amounting together to no less than 22·1 per cent. In the midland group, comprising Cambridge, Northampton, Hertford, Bedford, Bucks, Oxford, and Berks, there was a decrease of 6·2 per cent.; and in the south and south-western counties of Sussex, Hants, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, and Devon, a decrease of 2·9 per cent. But in these two latter districts there was an increase, though merely nominal in amount, in the counties of Northampton, Bucks, Oxford, Hants, Dorset, and Devon.

Such are the results in the agricultural districts. Including the counties of Westmoreland, Salop, and Hereford, which have not been noticed above, they prove an aggregate decrease of 10 per cent. last year, and of 5 per cent. on a comparison of the two last periods of three years.

The decrease of Commitments in England has therefore been general, continued, and extensive to a degree of which there is no recorded example in this kingdom. The Metropolis forms the only great exception to this favourable statement. Middlesex alone contains one-tenth of the total population of England and Wales, and has more than a double proportion of Commitments. The steady increase of Commitments in this county has been the subject of remark in former years: this increase has continued: in the last year, when the Returns for every other large manufacturing and commercial county showed a decrease of Commitments, the increase in Middlesex was 10·2 per

cent.; and, on a comparison of the two last periods of three years, 13 per cent. In Surrey and Kent, which so closely adjoin the Metropolis, and within the boundaries of which so large a proportion of the population of Surrey resides, the results are more favourable. In Surrey last year the numbers remained the same as in the preceding year; and there was a decrease of 6·1 per cent. on a comparison of the two last periods of three years. In Kent there was a decrease of 8·8 per cent. last year, and of 9·9 per cent. on the two last periods of three years.

In Wales the Commitments in several counties are few, and subject to much variation. In North Wales there was a small aggregate decrease last year, an increase of 5·9 per cent. on the two last three years. In the most populous districts of South Wales the Commitments decreased 15·1 per cent. last year; and though there was also a decrease of 5·5 per cent. in the preceding year, yet, on carrying back the comparison to the two last three years, the effects of the great increase which has taken place in these counties is still apparent, and exceeds 29 per cent.

Having traced the proportion of the decreased Commitments in the different localities, it follows next to point out those crimes in which such decrease has been the most perceptible. In this inquiry it is important to bear in mind that the general decrease of the last year amounted to 8·4 per cent., and on the comparison of the two last periods of three years, to 6·7 per cent.

Of the six classes into which Crimes have been arranged in the "Criminal Tables," the 1st class, comprizing the *Offences against the Person*, contains the chief crimes of the greatest turpitude. In this class the aggregate decrease last year was 14·7 per cent. It amounted to no less than 25 per cent. in offences of murder, attempts to murder and maim, and manslaughter, and to nearly 40 per cent. in concealment of the births of infants—a crime, in most cases, closely connected with murder. In the unnatural offences, which had been increasing for several previous years, the decrease was 39 per cent., and in rape and attempts to ravish, 29 per cent. There was, in fact, no increase of importance on any offence in this class. On carrying back the comparison to the last two periods of three years, the result is different. The offences included in this class, which have been subject to great variations, irrespective of Commitments generally, increased 14·1 per cent. in 1843; and the partial decrease of 1844, though added to the large decrease last year, still leaves an increase of 9 per cent., which extends to all the worst offences.

In the 2nd Class—*The Offences against Property with Violence*—there was a considerable decrease in 1845, which is general on the whole class, and amounts to 16·4 per cent. In burglary and house-breaking this decrease was 11·8 per cent.; and in robbery 25·5 per cent. On a comparison of the two last periods of three years, a decrease of nearly 3·8 per cent. is shown, though it has arisen on the least atrocious offences; and in burglary, and the more violent descriptions of robbery, there was an increase.

It is the 3rd Class—*The Offences against Property committed without Violence*—which, comprising all simple cases of theft and fraud, contains the great bulk of the commitments. In this important class the

decrease in 1845 amounted to 4·5 per cent., and included all the principal offences except larceny from the person and larceny by servants. The decrease, which commenced in 1843, was in that year, with one exception, confined to this class of offences; it has steadily continued in the last two years, and shows a total decrease of 7·9 per cent. on a comparison of the three years ending in 1842 with the last three years.

In the 4th Class—*The Malicious Offences against Property*—is included all commitments for wilful burning, and wanton injuries to cattle and property. From the prevalence of incendiarism, particularly in the eastern agricultural districts, the offences of this class showed a very considerable increase in 1844, and the decrease did not commence till 1845; but in that year it amounted to 57 per cent., and was common to the whole class. On a comparison of the two last periods of three years, there appears an increase of no less than 76 per cent., arising out of the great prevalence of incendiary offences in the years 1843 and 1844.

In *Forgery and Offences against the Currency*—Class 5—there was a decrease in 1845 of 20 per cent. on the class, and of nearly 27 per cent. on forgery separately. On the two last periods of three years there was a slight increase, amounting for the whole class to 2·7 per cent.

In the 6th Class, containing those offences which do not fall within the definitions of the foregoing classes, the commitments decreased one-third in 1845. This decrease extends to the offences against the game laws, perjury, riots, and breaches of the peace, and to the prosecutions for keeping disorderly houses; and there is a total absence of commitments for seditious riots or sedition. In the three last, compared with the three preceding years, the decrease on the class amounts to 27 per cent.

It appears from the foregoing statements that the decrease which arose in 1843 was in that year confined to the simple offences of theft, and was most considerable in all those petty offences which form the bulk of the 3rd class, and which are the usual commencement of a course of crime. In 1844, the second year of decreasing commitments, the decrease of this description of offences continued, and the decrease at the same time extended to burglary, housebreaking, and robbery,—crimes usually committed by more practised depredators; to forgery, and offences against the currency; to poaching; and, though but slightly, to the offences against the person. In 1845, the third year of decreasing commitments, the decrease, although less in amount, continued in thefts committed without violence; and also in the offences against property with violence; and became more considerable in forgery, coining, and uttering counterfeit coin. The offences against the person, in which the decrease did not commence till 1844, and was then only of trifling amount, showed in 1845 a large decrease. In the same year, the malicious offences against property, which had been previously unaffected by the general decrease of commitments, decreased very considerably, and every description of offences was then included in the decrease.

The decrease of crimes of violence which has characterized the Commitments, particularly in the last year, has been accompanied, as might be anticipated, by a considerable decrease of the more severe

punishments. This is most conspicuous in the numbers sentenced to transportation, which, on a comparison of the two last periods of three years, has decreased 14·1 per cent., a ratio more than double the decrease of the Commitments. The sentences passed in the two last periods of three years were as follows:—

	1840	1841	1842	1840-42	1843	1844	1845	1843-45
Death .. .. .	77	80	57	214	97	57	49	203
Transportation for Life .. .. .	238	156	191	585	225	180	79	484
„ above 15 years .. .. .	18	21	37	76	46	50	22	118
„ 15 yrs., and above 10 yrs. ..	714	709	726	2,149	641	543	405	1,589
„ 10 yrs., „ 7 yrs. ..	1,194	1,240	1,402	3,836	1,471	1,126	1,119	3,716
„ 7 yrs. .. .. .	1,941	1,674	1,841	5,456	1,800	1,421	1,273	4,494
Imprisonment above 3 years .. ..	1	..	1	2	..	1	..	1
„ 3 years, and above 2 years ..	35	10	13	58	2	13	3	18
„ 2 years, „ 1 year ..	548	465	464	1,477	464	454	360	1,278
„ 1 year, „ 6 mths. ..	2,064	2,060	2,594	6,718	2,332	1,927	1,654	5,913
„ 6 months, and under ..	13,462	13,212	14,799	40,473	13,477	12,574	12,035	38,086
Whipped, Fined, and Discharged ..	632	653	601	1,886	531	506	398	1,495

In the six years above-mentioned, the number of prisoners detained in custody as insane was—

	1840	1841	1842	1840-42	1843	1844	1845	1843-45
Found Insane .....	13	14	10	37	12	16	12	40
Acquitted on the ground of Insanity.....	12	14	13	39	17	21	19	57

In each of the six *Classes of Offences* the proportion of Acquittals and Discharges in the last year was as follows:—

1st Class, Offences against the Person .....	33·82 per cent.
2nd „ Offences against Property, with Violence .....	27·53 „
3rd „ „ „ without Violence .....	26·97 „
4th „ Malicious Offences against Property .....	65·77 „
5th „ Forgery, and Offences against the Currency.....	22·37 „
6th „ Other Offences (not included in the above Classes)	44·37 „

The considerable variation shown by the above figures would probably to a great extent arise from the difficulty of proof which attends some crimes, and in consequence of the severe penalties which attach to others.

The direct comparison of the ages of criminals extends no further back than the last four years; the periods under which they are calculated having been altered in 1842, to assimilate them to the quinquennial periods adopted in the general census.

The two following Tables prove a decrease of the offenders classed under each of the several periods of age; but that the decrease has been much less on the class under 20 than on the class above that age. This is clearly shown by the increasing proportion of the offenders aged under 15 years, and aged 15 and under 20 years, and the decreasing proportion of those above that age.

Numbers Committed in the Years.....	1842	1843	1844	1845
Aged under 15 years .....	1,672	1,670	1,596	1,549
„ 15 and under 20 years.....	6,884	6,725	6,190	5,850
„ 20 „ 25 „ .....	7,731	7,200	6,399	5,881
„ 25 „ 30 „ .....	4,781	4,419	3,924	3,471
„ 30 „ 40 „ .....	5,274	4,839	4,079	3,805
„ 40 „ 50 „ .....	2,592	2,399	2,202	1,987
„ 50 „ 60 „ .....	1,183	1,044	1,049	874
„ 60 years and above .....	573	547	524	418
Ages not ascertained .....	619	748	579	468

Centesimal Proportion in the Years..	1842	1843	1844	1845	Census of 1841.
Aged under 15 years .....	5·3	5·7	6·0	6·4	36·0
„ 15 and under 20 years ....	22·0	22·7	23·3	24·1	9·9
„ 20 „ 25 „ ....	24·7	24·3	24·1	24·2	9·7
„ 25 „ 30 „ ....	15·3	14·9	14·9	14·3	8·0
„ 30 „ 40 „ ....	16·8	16·4	15·3	15·6	12·9
„ 40 „ 50 „ ....	8·3	8·1	8·3	8·2	9·6
„ 50 „ 60 „ ....	3·8	3·5	3·9	3·6	6·4
„ 60 years and above.....	1·8	1·9	2·0	1·7	7·2
Ages not ascertained .....	2·0	2·5	2·2	1·9	0·3

The increasing proportion of Female offenders, which has been remarked in former Tables, still continues. During the time of the great increase of the commitments, this proportion increased in a higher ratio; and it has not decreased in an equal ratio in the last three years of decreasing commitments. Thus there appears to be an almost uninterrupted increase in the proportion of Female offenders; for the sudden decrease in 1842 is peculiar to that year, and is caused by the commitment of 1,141 persons for seditious offences, who were all males.

Years.	No. of Females.	Centesimal Proportion.	Years.	No. of Females.	Centesimal Proportion.	Years.	No. of Females.	Centesimal Proportion.
1837	4,205	21·6	1840	5,212	23·7	1843	5,340	22·0
1838	4,189	22·1	1841	5,200	23·0	1844	4,993	23·1
1839	4,612	23·2	1842	5,569	21·6	1845	4,962	25·6

The increase in the first of the above three years, 1837-39, was comprised of 20·8 per cent. females, and 8·9 per cent. only of males. In the second three years, 1840-42, which includes the seditious offences, 23·3 per cent. of females, and 20·8 per cent. of males. The decrease in the last three years, 1843-45, was females 4·3 per cent., and males 7·2 per cent.

The information with respect to the instruction received by the persons committed shows, as in former years, that the proportion of

those who have been entirely without instruction continues to decrease, and the proportion of those who have received the first elements of instruction to increase in nearly the same ratio,—a result which must be attributed to the increasing diffusion of education, of which it is a proof. The following figures show the relative proportion in each of the last nine years:—

Degrees of Instruction.	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845
Unable to read and write..	35·85	34·40	33·53	33·32	33·21	32·35	31·00	29·77	30·61
Able to read and write imperfectly .....	52·08	53·41	53·48	55·57	56·67	58·32	57·60	59·28	58·34
Able to read and write well	9·46	9·77	10·07	8·29	7·40	6·77	8·02	8·12	8·38
Instruction superior to reading & writing well	0·43	0·34	0·32	0·37	0·45	0·22	0·47	0·42	0·37
Instruction could not be ascertained .....	2·18	2·08	2·60	2·45	2·27	2·34	2·91	2·41	2·30

The centesimal proportion of the different degrees of instruction in the last three years of decreasing commitments is compared, in the following Table, with the two previous periods of three years of increasing commitments;—

Degrees of Instruction.	1837-39.	1840-42.	1842-45.
Unable to read and write .....	34·58	32·93	30·48
Able to read and write imperfectly .....	52·99	56·93	58·38
Able to read and write well .....	9·77	7·46	8·14
Instruction superior to reading and writing well.....	0·36	0·34	0·44
Instruction could not be ascertained .....	2·30	2·34	2·56

From the preceding Table, it is clear that the increasing proportion of criminals who have received the first elements of instruction suffered no interruption during the great decrease of commitments in the last three years. This is an additional proof, were such necessary, that instruction is unconnected with the causes which lead to crime; and that the increase in the proportion of instructed criminals must, as already stated, be referred to the progress of instruction among the classes from which the criminals come. The Table exhibits another important fact,—that in the three years, 1840-42, a period of much suffering to the labouring classes, when distress may have led many, who would have withstood ordinary temptations, to the commission of crime, the rate of increase of those who had received the first degree of instruction was more than double what it had been in the three antecedent, or in the three succeeding years; but the rate of decrease of those who were entirely uninstructed continued the same.

WHITEHALL, 4th April, 1846.